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SIGNIFICANT WATER COLOR PAINTING

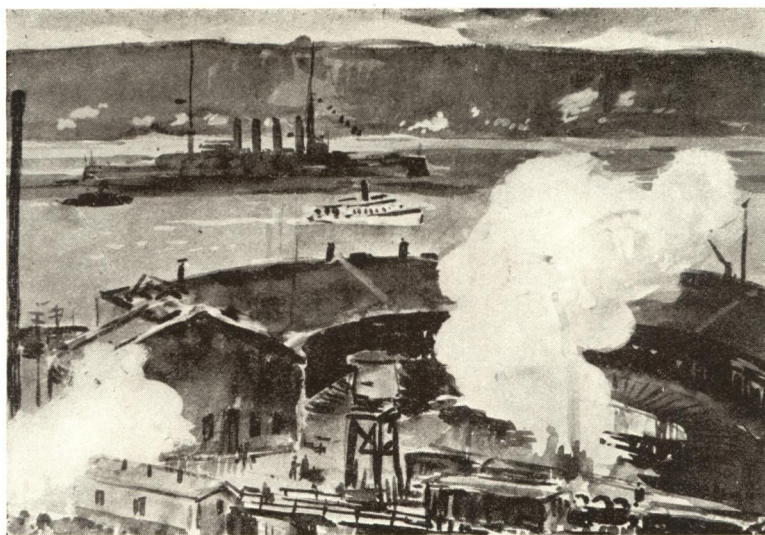
In the recent acquisition of six water colors by Gifford Beal and two by Hayley Lever, supplementing the few previously owned, the Museum has secured the nucleus of a collection of water colors which, as augmented from time to time, we hope to see become representative of the best work in this medium.

The works of Mr. Beal entitled:

Fund, the other presented by the artist.

The works of both these men show the importance and superiority of this medium in the hands of artists who have acquired a sense of the right use of their material and the mastery of its resources.

Painting in watercolor on paper had its origin in the drawings of the



"WINDY DAY, HUDSON RIVER," BY GIFFORD BEAL. ONE OF A GROUP OF SIX WATER COLORS PURCHASED FROM THE EMER J. FARWELL FUND AND THE INCOME OF THE W. C. YAWKEY FUND.

"*Spring*," "*Arabesque*," "*Windy Day, Hudson River*," "*New York Freight Yards*," "*Summer Landscape*" and "*Central Park*" were purchased from the Emer J. Farwell Fund and the income of the William C. Yawkey Fund.

The Lever paintings entitled: "*The Wharf, Gloucester*" and "*Boats, Gloucester*," were acquired one from the income of the Elliott T. Slocum

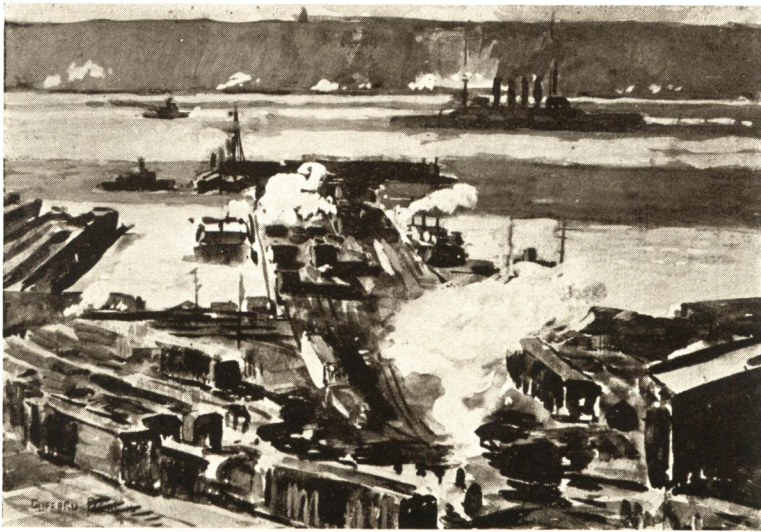
Renaissance, in the employment of transparent sepia washes by the old masters to give tone to their sketches. This flat tinted monochrome, used as the auxiliary of line, was gradually supplemented by a sense of modeling, and as a convenience in indicating to his artisans or a prospective customer the colors to be employed in a given scheme, the draughtsman soon after

began to use tints merely as memoranda to suggest the effect of full coloring.

The Dutch and Flemish artists of the seventeenth century seemed to anticipate the possibilities of modern water color. There are landscape sketches in full color by Rubens in which this is shown. It was not until the eighteenth century, however, that the tinted drawings gave

of wide stretches of nature, seen under the caressing atmosphere of his native land. Water color painting has flourished in England continuously since the days of Turner with ardent and serious devotees of the calibre of Sir Alfred East, Frank Brangwyn, Arthur Rackham, and others.

In other countries, however, its progress has been hampered by the



"NEW YORK FREIGHT YARDS," BY GIFFORD BEAL. ONE OF A GROUP OF SIX WATER COLORS PURCHASED FROM THE EMER J. FARWELL FUND AND THE INCOME OF THE W. C. YAWKEY FUND.

way to a developed and distinct technical method, by the immediate predecessors of Turner, and this great master in England, on the threshold of the nineteenth century, was among the first to bring it to its fullest expression. The National Gallery preserves ample evidence of the skill and resourcefulness of Turner in the employment of the medium to record his observations

prejudice that it was the plaything of the dilettante or the holiday medium of great painters who turned to it in a spirit of relaxation. In America this prejudice was partially overcome when Winslow Homer, with decisive mastery of its resources, showed the full power and brilliant significance of watercolor in a way worthy of emulation.

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Watercolor painting is of two kinds: transparent watercolor, founded upon the principle that the light is to come from the paper, and opaque, founded upon the principle that the light is to come from body white mixed with the hues. These principles are at opposite poles, and admit of a number of variations. The average watercolor exhibition comprising everything from wash drawings to pastels is therefore confusing to the public. Opaque watercolor is amenable to any painter versed in the use of oil-colors, and has the same right to existence. Transparent watercolor dependent upon the wash and the paper for its effect of light and color is much more difficult of accomplishment. It requires more skill and dexterity to handle the liquid color, and to know its resources and limitations. Contrary to popular belief, it is the most difficult of any method of painting. It requires thorough knowledge and mastery of nature's forms, and a sureness of hand for its immediate rendering, which can be only acquired by long practice. Transparent watercolor paintings have an added charm in the fact that their summary passages bring us close to the creative artist. His work is a living thing. In it one may see his eagerness of attack, his mental attitude, his virtuosity of hand. Something of the excitement which he experienced is fixed with his impression to the paper.

—C. B.